

Case Studies

A sure way to explore your “what if?” response is to work through a case study. Here are a few to get you started...

Playing Devil’s Advocate

As you are planning an event, a fellow group member argues with almost every suggestion that is offered. He says that he’s “just playing devil’s advocate” to help folks see different sides to the issues. Yet, you’re seeing some of the quieter members withdrawing—they don’t feel comfortable expressing their opinions or suggestions anymore because they expect they’ll automatically be shot down.

You see the value of different perspectives but want to make sure that a collaborative, cooperative environment is being created, too. What might you do in this situation?

Coming to the Rescue?

During Family Weekend you walk in on a parent berating a fellow group member. She is screaming at her and obviously very upset. You don’t want to make the situation worse yet you want to help your peer handle the problem. What role would you take on? What would you need to take into consideration?

Talking Trash

You overhear a group member talking trash about your advisor to another group member in the middle of an event. Students, faculty, and staff are milling around—it’s likely they can hear part of the conversation, too. While you don’t want to publicly confront these members, you’re also very concerned about their lack of tact and respect. What do you do?



Holding a Case Study Competition

One way to use case studies is to have a friendly competition. Here are some how-to tips:

- ▲ Choose a series of 2-4 case studies as the base for your competition.
- ▲ Create rules that state things like:
 - ✓ Each team will have 5 minutes per case study to make their case.
 - ✓ Answers need to be based on the realities of your home campus.
 - ✓ Clear rationales for actions need to be outlined.
 - ✓ No name-calling or uncivil action will be tolerated throughout the course of this competition.
 - ✓ Good sportspersonship is expected at all times.
- ▲ Have members form teams of 3-5 people each.
- ▲ Solicit a panel of judges to score the case study competition. Provide them with parameters.
- ▲ Hold the competition within an atmosphere of learning and collaboration.

To Consider:

- ▲ You may even want to secretly instruct judges to give extra points for teams that collaborate and contribute to the success of others.
- ▲ Consider having returning members serve as judges for this competition. It gives them a significant role to play while also valuing their experience.

Taking Credit

Several group members have been working diligently to pull off a campus event. It goes really well and your group receives compliments aplenty. At one point, you hear someone giving a compliment to a group member who didn’t do much to help with the event. That member takes credit for the success, going as far as saying, “I worked so hard and love that it went off without a hitch!” This makes your blood boil because you know that the credit isn’t going to those who most deserve it and you feel this member is misrepresenting himself. What might you do?